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AGRICULTURE

The radio output on agriculture in the period under review suggests no marked improvement in the two major weaknesses that are under constant official fire--stock breeding and mechanization. Pressure on collective workers and officials varies of course with each agricultural season. Thus for example when summer harvesting is over the propaganda emphasis is shifted to autumn and fallow plowing, and in winter time it is snow-retention and similar field operations that claim attention. The livestock industry and machinery maintenance--the Achilles heel of Soviet agriculture--normally account for the bulk of the radio material on the subject throughout the year. Theft and squandering of agricultural property and produce are also perennial themes.

As regards mechanization of agriculture, it is not only the chronic inefficiency in the utilization and maintenance of equipment that is the object of frequent attacks. The so-called anti-mechanization attitude (anti-mekhanizatsionnye nastroyeniya) of local officials, cautiously referred to in the press and on the radio, is treated as a far more serious obstacle to agricultural development than broken tractors or undernourished cattle. The connection between the reluctance to introduce and make use of new farming equipment and the oft-criticized idleness (prostoy) of machinery becomes palpable in view of the officials' efforts to draw the distinction between tractors remaining unserviceable through neglect or disrepair and the working equipment which is simply not utilized.

A Denisov SOTSIALISTICHESKOYE ZEMLEDELIE article reprinted in part by PRAVDA on 1 December (not broadcast) states that the USSR Ministry of Agriculture itself must assume much of the blame for hindering the progress of mechanization. The country would have been richer by millions of poods of agricultural products, it is claimed, had the Ministry bothered to acquire the necessary machinery for the irrigation of the enormous tracts of dry land now under cultivation. Although most of the other field operations have been mechanized up to 90-95%, the irrigation is still "being done exclusively by hand" (proizvoditsya iskluchitelno vruchnuyu). The excuse given by the Ministry that it is not within its competence to deal with new machinery is refuted by the fact that it has shown no interest in obtaining it and therefore failed to place any orders with industry for irrigation equipment:

Not a single plan to mechanize irrigation submitted to the Ministry in the past 4-5 years has been put into effect.

Russian text:

V tekhnicheskoy poslednykh 4-5 let ni odno is postupivshikh v ministerstvo predlozheniy po mekhanizatsii poliva ne bylo prevvoreno v shizn.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Denisov points out, still betrays a lack of interest in further mechanization and "fails to support" (ne podderzhivayet) the innovators' attempts to improve the situation. This unaccountable reluctance to mechanize is further stressed in the accusation that

even the planned large new irrigation system which is designed to cover hundreds of thousands of hectares of land calls for exclusively manual irrigation.

Russian text:

dazhe v zone proektiruyemykh meichas krupneishikh irrigatsionnykh sistem, kotorye budut oroshat sotni tysyach hektarov zemel, predusmatrivayetsya iskluchitelno ruchnoy poliv.

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Discussion of equipment repair continues to focus attention on the widely publicized "central method" (uzlovoy metod), that is, overhauling machinery at large repair shops such as the inter-kolkhoz and inter-rayon tractor shops. The failure of the previous system whereby each machine-tractor station was responsible for the maintenance and repair of its own machinery, prompted the Government to open workshops amply supplied with mechanical skill and spare parts to take care of large numbers of MTS. It appears, however, that many of the stations prefer to stick to the old method of on-the-spot repairs which are officially branded as obsolete and inadequate. NADDNEPRIANSKA PRAVDA (3 December) says that the continued application of the outmoded repair methods in a number of rayons "has led to a collapse of the tractor-repair plan in October and its underfulfillment in November." Nor is there any visible improvement this month, since the quarterly plan has so far been completed by only 15.2%. The situation is said to be "especially intolerable" in Kakhovskiy, Nishnepirogovskiy and a number of other rayons.

STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA (2 December) asserts that in the majority of the krai collective farms and MTS "the repair of tractors and combines is still very slow," and that some of them, apparently unaware of the autumn-winter repair season, have not even begun to tackle the job. The inter-rayon repair plants are recommended as the only way out of the mechanical mess since they alone are able to secure the sustained operations of the repaired machines. The rare admission that the living conditions of the mechanics may have something to do with the inferior quality of their work is contained in a ZARYA editorial of 3 December. Declaring that the oblast plan for tractor repairs was completed by only 50% by 30 November and combines by 19%, the paper assails the Dnepropetrovsk agricultural officials for their obvious disregard for the human element involved in the work:

It is clear that the mechanics can repair tractors with a high quality of labor if they are provided with decent living quarters, dining rooms and good rest conditions.

The mechanics' reaction to the treatment hinted above may be inferred from a further editorial remark that "frequently tractors repaired and released for use have to be reassembled again and regulated."

We must fight those who pay lip-service to progressive methods of tractor repair, but actually adhere to the old and outworn system, says MOLOT on 4 December, and adds: "the fact that the oblast fourth quarter plan has been fulfilled by one-third proves it." Warning against a repetition of last year's mistakes, reportedly already noted in some places, the paper reveals that "very often last year tractors broke down after the first week in the field as a result of bad repair work." The MTS of Verkhnedonskiy, Voloshinskiy, Morozovskiy and Belokalitvesnkiy rayons are said to be lagging far behind their plan targets. The three MTS of the last-named rayon, for example, managed to repair only 11 tractors during the first two months of the last quarter.

Instances of good machinery standing idle are listed by CHERNOMORSKA KOMUNA (4 December) and STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (9 December), both papers referring to the situation as intolerable and calling for immediate and drastic measures. The Odessa oblast authorities are belabored for "making no effort" to improve the qualitative performance of the field equipment while in Stalingrad criticism is directed against the machine-tractor stations who by and large "ignore the central method of machine repairs." An unsigned PRAVDA article of 7 December (not broadcast) discloses that tractor-maintenance in Smolensk oblast has deteriorated to such an extent that broken-down equipment is frequently abandoned altogether. Only 7% of the current quarterly plan for machinery repairs have been completed so far; "unfortunately, Smolensk oblast is no exception" (k sozhaleniu, Smolenskaya oblast ne yavlyaetsya isklucheniem). Kalinin oblast with its 17% plan-performance as well as Stalingrad and Bryansk oblasts and Krasnoyarsk krai "are not much better."

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The Livestock Industry: Fodder & Quarters Needed: A summarized version of a RYANSKA ZHITOMIRSHCHINA editorial (3 December) asserts bluntly that the numerical increase in the oblast cattle herds, and their productivity, leave much to be desired but offers no further details. The paper's verdict is that on the progress of the stock industry of Potievskiy, Volodarsk-Volynskiy, Cherniakhovskiy and other rayons is quite unsatisfactory. A report from Chkalov broadcast on 7 December says that the existing fodder supplies are far too inadequate because the available machines for processing it "are not being used." Lack of transportation facilities is said to have aggravated the problem still further: "only one-sixth of the planned amount of coarse fodder has been delivered to the livestock bases." The stock farms are now urged not to wait for any assistance from the machine-tractor stations but to use their own draft animals to transport the fodder to where it is badly needed.

A Zemtsov dispatch from Alma-Ata carried by PRAVDA on 7 December but not broadcast quotes some references to stock-breeding in Kazakhstan made at a recent plenary session of the Kazakh Party's Central Committee. Certain oblast Party and Executive Committees, it was revealed at the Plenum, had taken it upon themselves to reduce the tempo of livestock development in their respective areas to a level below the one prescribed by the Government and, on top of that, had the temerity to ask the State for additional assistance. How much the Party and the Government have done to "improve" the livestock industry may be gathered from Zemtsov's remark that

in the first 10 months of this year the Council of Ministers of Kazakh SSR has adopted 215 decisions on the livestock industry, and the Central Party Committee 44. Many of these decisions have remained unfulfilled.

Russian text:

Za 10 mesiatsev tekushchego goda Sovet Ministrov Kazakhskoy SSR prinyal po voprosam zhivotnovodstva 215 resheniy, a buro TsK - 44 reshenia. Mnogie iz etikh resheniy ostalis nevypolnennymi.

That the material conditions of the stock tenders can affect the progress of the livestock industry one way or the other is conceded by ZARYA of 10 December. The Dnepropetrovsk oblast Party and other officials, it is claimed, seldom if ever visit the stock farms under their jurisdiction and are not familiar with local conditions. It is true, the paper says, that we have many backward rayons where livestock productivity is low and its upkeep is inadequate in many respects, but it may also be true that the material life of the service personnel has something to do with it. The oblast officials, it appears, are well aware of the industry's shortcomings as far as cattle are concerned but "they do not always know the conditions under which dairy maids and hog, calf and fowl keepers are laboring." It is no wonder therefore that the milk yield per cow this year "is even lower than last year." The fodder situation is unsatisfactory and the livestock-building construction plans have not been fulfilled. Nine rayons are listed as lagging far behind the livestock development plans in addition to "a number of others" which are not named.

Discussing the same theme on 11 December, DNEPROPETROVSKAYA PRAVDA also refers to the human element affecting the industry's progress but in less flattering terms than the above-quoted ZARYA. The drop in the number of cattle, says the editorial, has occurred "as a result of squandering stock for so-called intrakolkhoz needs" (v rezultate rastranzhirovaniya ego na tak-nazyvayemie vnutrikolkhozhnie nuzhdy). Reduced to un-dialectical terms, it simply means that the farmers eat too much meat. Citing Verkhne-Dneprovskiy rayon as typical of the "most backward" areas of the oblast, the paper says that every aspect of the stock-breeding development has been taken care of by appropriate Party decisions--the only trouble is that "they remain on paper only."

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One hundred and ninety three of the oblast's collective farms have failed in their cattle development plan, and 172 others have been unable to cope with their sheep-breeding program. No comfort can be drawn from the present death rate of the young cattle, according to the paper, and this scourge will last as long as the shortage of adequate winter quarters.

KRASNY KURGAN (10 December) wonders why "the available technical facilities for fodder processing are not used" in so many rayons. In Baturinskiy rayon, for example, only three fodder cookers (zaparniki) have been put into operation "instead of the nine at their disposal." In Uksyanskiy rayon, "none of the available machines"--such as straw cutters, universal mills and others--"is being used." The paper lists five rayons where wintering conditions for cattle are far too inadequate and "fodder is distributed wrongly." These are the worst rayons of Kurgan oblast, it is pointed out, but many (unnamed) others are also showing unsatisfactory performance. Losses of cattle from preventable causes have been noted throughout Rostov oblast, according to an unsigned MOLOT article broadcast on 11 December. Cattle mortality (padezh skota) in some collective farms is reported as reaching alarming proportions: Over 100 animals perished in the "Kirov," "Put k Kommunizmu" and "Noviy Put" farms alone. The annual milk yield per cow is said to have dropped to 1061 liters which is considerably less than last year. Although some rayons have stockpiled sufficient fodder for the winter, it is learned that a number of individual farms have "not more than three to four days' supplies of fodder on hand."

A report from Stavropol broadcast on 9 December refers to the discussion of the livestock industry at a recent krai Party plenary session. The latter is said to have found the situation quite satisfactory and the progress of stock-breeding rather impressive. Discussing the same topic two days later, STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA unwittingly debunks the mentioned report by painting a somewhat different picture. Below are quotations from both versions on the same subject:

Broadcast, 9 December

The rural Communists have improved their leadership ... and achieved some successes. The number of livestock has increased by hundreds of thousands of head this year, and the number of poultry one and one-half times. The livestock produce delivery plans have been fulfilled ahead of schedule.

(sel'skie kommunisty uluchshili rokovodstvo ... i dobilis' nekotorykh uspekhnov. Kolichestvo skota uvelichilos' v etom godu na sotni tysyach golov, a ptitsy v potora raza. Dosrochno vpolnen gosudarstv. Plan postavok vsekh zhivotnovodcheskikh produktov).

STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA, 11 December

It was noted at the recent plenary session ... that the 1952 stockbreeding development plan has not been fulfilled by the kolkhozes for sheep, cattle or fowl. ... the plan for building winter quarters for livestock is not being fulfilled, loss of stock is still tolerated.

(Sostoyavshiysya nedavno plenium Stavropolskogo kraikoma partii otmetil, chto ... kolkhozami kraya do sikh por ne vpolnen ustanovlenniy na 1952 god plan po ovtsam, krupnomu rogamu skotu i ptitsam ... plan po postroike pomeshcheni dlya zimovki skota ne vpolnyaetsya, vse eshche dopuskayetsya padezh skota).

Kolkhoz Statute Violations are reported from several sources including a PRAVDA editorial which hints that such violations are still widespread. LVOVSKAYA PRAVDA is quoted (3 December) as citing a number of "basic law violations" and demanding the strictest punishment for the guilty. Most of the cases are said to have occurred in Brody and Nestorov rayons, but no reference is made to the nature of the mentioned crimes. A LENINSKOYE ZNAMYA article broadcast on 9 December urges the rural auditing commissions (revizionnie komissii) to probe deeper into the affairs of the collective farms and unearth "all cases of violation" by demanding proper documentation for the funds, properties and agricultural products expended by the collective farms. This, the article intimates, must be done as soon as possible in order "to insure the complete elimination of the practice of squandering communal wealth."

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A MOLDOVA SOCIALISTA appeal to all Party and Soviet organizations to "unveil and liquidate" all cases of Statute violations in the Republic is aired on the Kishinev radio on 14 December. The irregularities noted in Beltsy okrug are said to have prompted the Moldavian Council of Ministers to adopt a special decision against the kolkhoz charter violations. The editorial offers no further details, however, beyond the remark that the strict observance of the statute "is the main prerequisite" for the solution of the current agricultural tasks. Denouncing the theft and squandering of collective farm property, PRAVDA (13 December) similarly calls for stern punishment for "the enemies of the collective farm system." Quoting Malenkov's report to the 19th Party Congress, the paper hints that what he said then is also true now, since many Party and Soviet officials, instead of safeguarding communal property, "pilfer it themselves." This is reported to have been going on in Krasnoyarsk krai, despite PRAVDA's repeated warnings. In Sushinsky rayon, for example, the local officials "shamelessly dive into the collective farm pockets and encourage others to do the same." These are similar facts, it is asserted, have been known to the Krasnoyarsk krai Party Committee, while pertinent evidence has been accumulating on their desks and "left unattended" for months.

INDUSTRY

The major issues highlighted in radio and press discussion of industrial activities--slow mechanization, low labor efficiency and high production costs--frequently appear in the same context, particularly in the case of industries affected by all these shortcomings. References to the technical aspect of production invariably stress the point that it is the lack of "machine-mindedness" rather than machinery that hampers further development. As in agriculture, the official contention is that equipment of every description is available in abundance but that its integration in production is held back by the inexplicable predilection of certain industrial officials for manual labor. That the so-called production innovators (efficiency experts) are not too popular in industry has been alluded to time and again on a number of regional transmitters. Continued official concern about inferior quality of production may be inferred from the recurrent references to the overriding importance of higher qualitative indices.

The NADDNEPRYANSKA PRAVDA editorial of 13 December is typical of most of the broadcasts on industrial themes in that it epitomizes the chronic failings usually attributed to a large segment of Soviet industry. Discussing the highly-publicized Kakhovka construction project, the paper speaks of the avoidable production bottleneck created by the apparent reluctance to make use of all the available facilities:

The rich equipment with which the State arms the builders is being utilized far from its whole capacity. It is a fact that of the 677 machines 157 are not being used at all. In the meantime, manual labor is being used extensively in many places.

It is "a well-known fact" that certain Party and industry leaders "are not paying serious attention" to the mechanization of labor-consuming processes. The Dnieper Construction Administration is said to be well aware of the "disorganization and wasted labor" brought about by the non-utilization of machinery, but its efforts to remedy the situation have so far been negligible. What is actually happening at the Kakhovka and other construction projects is that "scrapers, bulldozers, tractors and other machines are standing idle while much of the work is being done by hand." The existence side by side of fully-mechanized and unmechanized sections of the same project makes coordination of production all but impossible, it is claimed. Nor can there be any talk, under such circumstances, of raising labor efficiency or stemming the tide of rising production costs. Some mention is also made of "squandering State funds" earmarked for construction purposes, "disruption of schedules, delays" and unbusinesslike attitude in general which tend to undermine progress. The only way to deal with these shortcomings, the paper suggests, is to take legal action against the perpetrators.

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Among the earlier broadcasts on these and related topics is a STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA editorial of 2 December. This paper speaks in disparaging terms of the "wrong attitude" (nepravilnoye otnoshenie) toward innovators in some of the largest Stalingrad plants like the locomotive engineering works and the tractor plant. It seems that these efficiency experts "do not get the necessary support" from the management or technical staff. Wherever they do improve production by introducing more efficient methods, their innovations are often "isolated" in that particular plant or even department and not publicized among the rest of the industrial workers as urged by the Party. As discussed in a previous CPW report, this sort of passive resistance to the perennial drive for higher production tempos, though usually treated in unspecific terms, is motivated by the understandable reluctance of the workers to adopt the frequent upward revisions of production quotas. One of the innovator's duties is "the creation of favorable conditions" for a higher production output per worker. But, barring the introduction of actual labor-saving machinery, these "favorable" conditions are expressed in such terms as "progressive norms," "statistical norms" and similar devices which simply call for greater exertions without extra compensation.

The so-called statistical norm (statisticheskaya norma), says MOLOT editorially on 7 November, "conforms to the present-day level of technique and reflects the experience of leading workers." This is mentioned with reference to some large plants in Novochoerkassk and Taganrog which still prefer to keep their old quotas despite the innovators' efforts to "improve" them. One of the largest agricultural-machine building plants, the "Rostselmash," is said to be among them. STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (13 December) attributes the low efficiency level prevailing in many Stalingrad industrial enterprises to "the lack of propagation of leading labor experience." A total of 40 enterprises of the local and cooperative industries alone have failed to attain their production goals in the first 10 months of the year because of obsolete labor organization and inadequate production quotas.

Production quality, costs and losses are discussed on the central and regional transmitters along stereotyped lines. PRAVDA speaks (8 December) of the tremendous losses sustained by the Soviet economy through faulty production alone. The Stalino agricultural-machine building plant, for example, has lost over a million rubles in the first 10 months of the year by producing defective machinery. The "shturmovichchina" (last-minute rush) method used at that plant is said to account for most of the rejects which at times amount to about half of the total number of machines produced. The performance of the Belorussian light industry is, according to the paper, characterized by similar failings. Manufactured products often have to be down-graded or rejected due to "major defects" (sushchestvennye defekty). It is also revealed that the introduction of the so-called Technical Control Departments to secure a minimum standard of production quality has not yet provided an ultimate solution of the problem:

There are cases when the chiefs of Technical Control Departments, acting under pressure of plant managers, approve the production of low-quality and unfinished products which do not conform to standards and technical production conditions.

Russian text:

Imeyutsya sluchai, kogda nachalniki otdelov tekhnicheskogo kontrolya pod nazhimom rukovoditeley predpriyatiy propuskayut nedobrokachestvennyuyu, nekomplektnuyu, ne sootvetstvuyushchuyu standartam i tekhnicheskim usloviyam produktsiu.

Faulty production is also the object of sharp criticism by a RYANSKA UKRAINA editorial of 9 December. In Zaporozhye oblast, it is pointed out, losses through rejects (vtraty vid braku) amount to tens of millions of rubles.

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But Zaporozhye, says the paper, is not alone in this unenviable performance, and adds that

this applies in particular to the enterprises of the ministries of light, local, food and meat-dairy industries of our Republic as well as to the Ukrainian Industrial Council.

Ukrainian text:

tse mozha skazaty, zokrema, pro pidpryemstva ministerstv legkoi, mistsevoi, kharchovoi, myaso-molochnoi promyslovosti nashoi respubliky ta Ukrpromrady.

Dishonesty, the paper continues, is frequently used to camouflage obsolete and inefficient production methods which "are detrimental to the interests of the State" (na shkodu interesam derzhavy). The Ukrainian construction projects mentioned earlier in this report are under fire for "creating artificial reserves" (shtucno stvoruyut rezervy), in the attempt to cover up the inefficiency of their outworn construction methods. Actually, however,

... the construction organizations of many ministries are using clearly obsolete norms for hydro-mechanization, norms which for several years have been exceeded two-three times over by the advanced construction organizations.

Ukrainian text:

... budivelni organizatsii bagatyokh ministerstv korystuyutsya yavno zastarilymi normami po gidromekhanizatsii, yaki vzhe protyagom ryadu rokiv u dva-tri razy perekryti v peredovykh budivelnykh organizatsiakh.

Among the other reports on industrial shortcomings are a SEVERNAYA PRAVDA editorial on Kostroma oblast lumber industry and a STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA editorial on "indifference to mechanization." Failings of the "Krivbas" coal industry are treated in a long DNEPROVSKAYA PRAVDA article on 4 December, and ZARYA VOSTOKA (10 December) says, without amplification, that "not a few serious shortcomings have been exposed" in the industry of Georgian SSR during the last few months.

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